

**Mail Blog**

Cortney Cassidy

SEP 01 2020



**Mail Blog** is a free blog sent in the mail so your eyes can take a screen break.

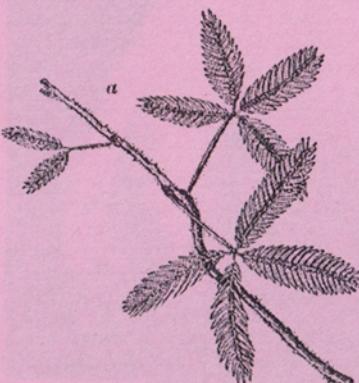
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If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, let me know so I can limit material waste.

If you move and still wish to receive Mail Blog, notify me of your new mailing address, or else the new resident might throw this away.

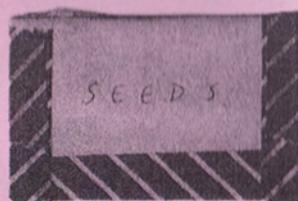
Thank you for reading!

Cortney  
[cortneycassidy.com](http://cortneycassidy.com)



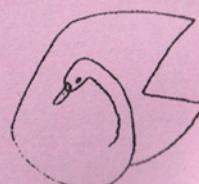
## WHAT OTHERS SAY

On that note, I have included some sensitive plant seeds and will send you the video I watched to grow them soon. Mine are doing so well and seem to be extra sensitive.



xxx

Hannah



For the last year I have been studying ethics through the lens of design, art, and tech. What started off as a focused initiative to build an ethics framework for my day-job design team soon became a passionate effort to get a better understanding of my role in society and to figure out how I can contribute more effectively. Because information is most useful when it is shared, I made my growing collection of resources available for anyone else who is interested in engaging in a self-initiated study of the ethics of their work as a designer or artist or technology person.

[are.na/cortney-cassidy/ethics-reader](http://are.na/cortney-cassidy/ethics-reader)

**“Good intentions are no safe guard against harm or exploitation.”**

Ruha Benjamin  
*Race after Technology*

**“No single person ever sees the whole picture.”**

James Bridle  
*New Dark Age*

**“Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.”**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
*The Danger of the Single Story*



Designer Chair

“She frequently talked about something being the “death of her,” and certainly anything could have been had she been the first to suffer it.”

Djuna Barnes  
*Nightwood*

“I had just read Djuna Barnes’s *Nightwood* I wanted to be able to withstand comparable sordidness without being affected.”

Yvonne Rainer  
*Feelings are Facts*



# “to be accepted in the world of thinking and art”

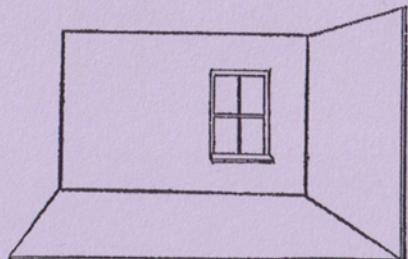
Rachel Cusk

*Shakespeare's Sisters*

**“It would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare.”**

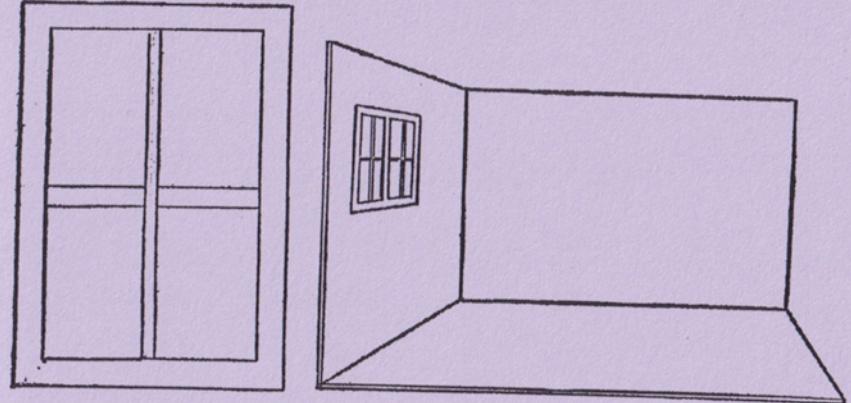
Virginia Woolf

*A Room of One's Own*



I suspect that most poems are written with whatever random thought occurs to the poet. In some cases that's fine, although poems like that are already ruined. They are banal and have a short life span. (Chika Sagawa in *Had they been the eyes of fish*)

Art actually is based on the notion that if you would really celebrate an idea or a principle,



you must think, you must plan, you must put yourself completely in the state of devotion and not simply give the first thing that comes to your head.

(Maya Deren, *In The Mirror of Maya Deren*)

Every single thing [Maya] said was prearranged in her notes, in her mind. She used to write things on little 3-by-5 index cards and carry them with her

everywhere. It always made me think of students of the Talmud where you take one sentence out of the Bible and you can write 50 books based on that one sentence. That's exactly what Maya did. Every word, every possible meaning, she didn't expand on what she knew but she went down into it.

(Miriam Arsham on Maya Deren, *In The Mirror of Maya Deren*)

# YES PLANTS DO FEEL

A “sequel” to my zine *Do Plants Feel?*  
The title is inspired by the comments from  
strangers responding to the title of my zine.



I paid money to look at leaves and listen to artificial nature sounds.

This place is considered a romantic date spot, but I only like to come here alone.

This time I won't take any photographs. Instead I will write next to the leaves, who feel like old friends. I recognize some of them from last time.

I stand under a big leaf. It is bigger than me. If someone were to look down from above the leaf, they would not see me.

I am exhilarated to hide in this very public space. Just let me be here as still as the plants, as part of the exhibit.

I will give the leaves my old air in exchange for their old air.

But what if a stranger asks me to take their photo? I probably look too emotional.

I feel too many things. My moods are like roots looking for the things I need. It would be nice to only feel the sun on the other side of the glass instead and present a nice flower in return.

I should pretend to be a plant and drink more water in an attempt to feel better.

The drops of water on the leaves never feel old like the way it tastes after I leave it on my nightstand.

Water probably doesn't care about being “old.”

I compare myself to a leaf that is doing very well. Why can't I be as good as this very successful leaf

on a plant with seven flowers? This leaf is very successful and I'm jealous.

I found the perfect place to sit still. A stranger is already sitting there so I will stand nearby until they get up and take their professional-grade camera somewhere else.

Other strangers can ask that stranger to take their photo instead of asking me.

The leaves near me are misted every five minutes.

I am also misted every five minutes. I am often dehydrated and wish all of life could feel as nice as this five-minute mist.

I wonder what these strangers think they are looking at when they look at a leaf.

Do they think about how

old the leaf is and how it helps them breath? Do they see a leaf that is only there while they are looking but forget about it forever when they turn around saying, "let's go get an iced coffee"?

I can tell that a stranger is drawing me in their notebook while I sit surrounded by leaves. I think it's only fair that I write down the stranger in my notebook.

Please don't notice the plants over here. Skip them. Don't come near my space, it is fragile and off limits.

I am starting to get soggy from the mist.

I am using my "fast" handwriting, for when I want to be less in control, through drops of water in my notebook.

A stranger talks about how they don't see the beauty

of plants since they attract bugs. Someone like that takes all of the bugs away from plants.

I have tried to take the bugs away that mysteriously appear in the soil and on the leaves of my house plants.

Where is the beauty in pretending to be a supreme being?

I am forced to listen to a stranger talk about breaking a leg at the knee joint while snowboarding. I don't have anything in common with them except for sharing the same space. The stranger doesn't care about the leaves which are providing the air for the phone call.

Maybe the leaves like to listen.

Like the plants, I don't have the self control to stop thinking about whatever feels good. But their

options are limited. That is what I need. Limited options. Like the plants, I can take too much and not survive.

The pond plant only shows me and the strangers one flower. It doesn't want to show any more. It is the pond's right and we also don't deserve any more. The pond plant is so generous.

My favorite stranger was the one who posed next to a beautiful flower and did not smile.

I feel bitter towards the strangers who take my place after I leave. It feels like mine even though I will probably never sit there again.

The leaves reach out so I reach back in my mind.

Please close the door behind you.



Arboreal snails use their sticky slime to help in climbing up trees since they lack limbs to do so



People trees, by Pooktre



The original Tree That Owns Itself in 1910



Richard Reames's *Peace in Cherry*

In his dissent to the 1972 *Sierra Club v. Morton* decision by the United States Supreme Court, Justice William O. Douglas wrote about whether plants might have legal standing:

Inanimate objects are sometimes parties in litigation. A ship has a legal personality, a fiction found useful for maritime purposes... So it should be as respects valleys, alpine meadows, rivers, lakes, estuaries, beaches, ridges, groves of trees, swampland, or even air that feels the destructive pressures of modern technology and modern life... The voice of the inanimate object, therefore, should not be stilled.